

LETTER

TO THE
EARL OF SHELBURNE,

NOW

MARQUIS OF LANSDOWNE,

ON HIS
SPEECH,

JULY 10, 1782.

RESPECTING THE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF
AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE;

WITH AN APPENDIX, CONTAINING,
THOUGHTS ON THE PEACE,

AND PROBABLE ADVANTAGES THEREOF;

A LETTER ON REPUBLICANISM;

AND

A LETTER TO THE ABBE SYEYES.

BY

THOMAS PAINE,

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AMERICAN WAR,

AND

AUTHOR OF THE WORKS INTITULED "*COMMON SENSE*,"
AND "*THE RIGHTS OF MAN*,"

&c. &c. &c.

NINTH EDITION.

L O N D O N :

PRINTED FOR D. JORDAN, PICCADILLY.

1792.



A LETTER, &c.

MY LORD,

A SPEECH which has been printed in several of the British and New-York newspapers, as coming from your Lordship, in answer to one from the Duke of Richmond of the 10th of July last, contains expressions and opinions so new and singular, and so enveloped in mysterious reasoning, that I address this publication to you, for the purpose of giving them a free and candid examination. The speech I allude to is in these words :

“ His Lordship said, it had been mentioned in another
“ place, that he had been guilty of inconsistency. To
“ clear himself of this, he asserted that he still held
“ the same principles in respect to American Independence
“ which he at first imbibed. He had been, and yet was of
“ opinion, whenever the Parliament of Great Britain ac-
“ knowledges that point, the sun of England’s glory is
“ set for ever. Such were the sentiments he possessed on
“ a former day, and such the sentiments he continued to
“ hold at this hour. It was the opinion of Lord Chatham,
“ as well as many able statesmen. Other noble Lords,
“ however, think differently ; and, as the majority of the
“ Cabinet

“ Cabinet support them, he acquiesced in the measure,
 “ dissenting from the idea; and the point is settled for
 “ bringing the matter into the full discussion of Parlia-
 “ ment, where it will be candidly, fairly, and impartially
 “ debated. The Independence of America would end in
 “ the ruin of England; and that a peace patched up with
 “ France, would give that proud enemy the means of yet
 “ trampling on this country. The sun of England’s glory
 “ he wished not to see set for ever; he looked for a spark
 “ at least to be left, which might in time light us up to a
 “ new day. But, if independence was to be granted, if
 “ Parliament deemed that measure prudent, he foresaw in
 “ his own mind that England was undone. He wished
 “ to God that he had been deputed to Congress, that he
 “ might plead the cause of that country as well as of this,
 “ and that he might exercise whatever powers he possessed
 “ as an orator, to save both from ruin, in a conviction to
 “ Congress, that, if their independence was signed, their
 “ liberties were gone for ever.

“ Peace, his Lordship added, was a desirable object,
 “ but it must be an honourable peace, and not an humiliat-
 “ ing one, dictated by France, or insisted on by America.
 “ It was very true, this kingdom was not in a flourishing
 “ state; it was impoverished by war. But if we were not
 “ rich, it was evident that France was poor. If we were
 “ straitened in our finances, the enemy were exhausted in
 “ their resources. This was a great empire; it abounded
 “ with brave men, who were able and willing to fight in a
 “ common cause; the language of humiliation should not,
 “ therefore, be the language of Great Britain. His Lord-
 “ ship said, that he was not ashamed nor afraid of those
 “ expressions going to America. There were numbers,
 “ great numbers there, who were of the same way of think-
 “ ing, in respect to that country being dependent on this,
 “ and who, with his Lordship, perceived ruin and inde-
 “ pendence linked together.”

Thus

Thus far the speech; on which I remark,—That his Lordship is a total stranger to the mind and sentiments of America; that he has wrapped himself up in fond delusion, that something less than Independence may, under his administration, be accepted; and he wishes himself sent to Congress, to prove the most extraordinary of all doctrines, which is, that INDEPENDENCE, the sublimest of all human conditions, is loss of liberty.

In answer to which we may say, that in order to know what the contrary word DEPENDENCE means, we have only to look back to those years of severe humiliation, when the mildest of all petitions could obtain no other notice than the haughtiest of all insults; and when the base terms of unconditional submission were demanded, or undistinguishable destruction threatened. It is nothing to us that the ministry have been changed again. The guilt of government is the crime of a whole country; and the nation that can, though but for a moment, think and act as England has done, can never afterwards be believed or trusted. There are cases in which it is as impossible to restore character to life, as it is to recover the dead. It is a phoenix that can expire but once, and from whose ashes there is no resurrection. Some offences are of such a slight composition, that they reach no farther than the temper, and are created or cured by a thought. But the sin of England has struck the heart of America, and nature has not left it in our power to say we can forgive.

Your Lordship wishes for an opportunity to plead before Congress “the cause of England and America, and to save, “as you say, both from ruin.”

That the country, which, for more than seven years, has fought our destruction, should now cringe to solicit our protection, is adding the wretchedness of disgrace to the misery of disappointment; and if England has the least spark of supposed honour left, that spark must be darkened by asking, and extinguished by receiving, the smallest favour from America: for the criminal who owes his life
to

the grace and mercy of the injured, is more executed by living than he who dies.

But a thousand pleadings, even from your Lordship, can have no effect. Honour, interest, and every sensation of the heart, would plead against you. We are a people who think not as you think ; and, what is equally true, you cannot feel as we feel. The situations of the two countries are exceedingly different. We have been the seat of war : you have seen nothing of it. The most wanton destruction has been committed in our fight ; the most insolent barbarity has been acted on our feelings. We can look round and see the remains of burnt and destroyed houses, once the fair fruit of hard industry, and now the striking monuments of British brutality. We walk over the dead whom we loved, in every part of America, and remember by whom they fell. There is scarcely a village but brings to life some melancholy thought, and reminds us of what we have suffered, and of those we have lost by the inhumanity of Britain. A thousand images arise to us, which, from situation, you cannot see, and are accompanied by as many ideas, which you cannot know ; and therefore your supposed system of reasoning would apply to nothing, and all your expectations die of themselves.

The question, whether England shall accede to the Independence of America, and which your Lordship says is to undergo a parliamentary discussion, is so very simple, and composed of so few cases, that it scarcely needs a debate.

It is the only way out of an expensive and ruinous war, which has now no object, and without which acknowledgment there can be no peace.

But your Lordship says, “ The sun of Great Britain “ will set whenever she acknowledges the Independence of “ America.” Whereas the metaphor would have been strictly just, to have left the sun wholly out of the figure, and have ascribed her not acknowledging it to the influence of the moon.

But

But the expression, if true, is the greatest confession of disgrace that could be made, and furnishes America with the highest notions of sovereign independent importance. Mr Wedderburne, about the year 1776, made use of an idea of much the same kind.—“ Relinquish America !” says he—“ What is it but to desire a giant to shrink spontaneously into a dwarf.”

Alas ! are those people who call themselves Englishmen of so little internal consequence, that when America is gone, or shuts her eyes upon them, their sun is set, they can shine no more, but grope about in obscurity, and contract into insignificant animals ? Was America, then, the giant of the empire, and England only her dwarf in waiting ? Is the case so strangely altered, that those who once thought we could not live without them, now declare they cannot exist without us ? Will they tell to the world, and that from their first Minister of State, that America is their all in all ; that it is by her importance only they can live, and breathe, and have a being ? Will they, who threatened to bring us to their feet, now cast themselves at ours, and own that without us they are not a nation ? Are they become so unqualified to debate on Independence, that they have lost all idea of it in themselves, and are calling to the rocks and mountains of America to cover their insignificance ? Or, if America is lost, is it manly to sob over it like a child for its rattle, and invite the laughter of the world by declarations of disgrace ? Surely, the more consistent conduct would be to bear it without complaint ; and to shew that England, without America, can preserve her Independence, and a suitable rank with other European Powers. You were not contented while you had her, and to weep for her now is childish.

But Lord Shelburne thinks that something may yet be done. What that something is, or how it is to be accomplished, is a matter in obscurity. By arms there is no hope. The experience of nearly eight years, with the expence of an hundred million pounds sterling, and the loss of two
armies,

armies, must positively decide that point. Besides, the British have lost their interest in America with the disaffected. Every part of it has been tried. There is no new scene left for delusion : and the thousands who have been ruined by adhering to them, and have now to quit the settlements they had acquired, and be conveyed like transports to cultivate the deserts of Augustine and Nova Scotia, has put an end to all farther expectations of aid.

If you cast your eyes on the people of England, what have they to console themselves with for the millions expended ? or, what encouragement is there left to continue throwing good money after bad ? America can carry on the war for ten years longer, and all the charges of government included, for less than you can defray the charges of war and government for one year. And I, who know both countries, know well, that the people of America can afford to pay their share of the expence much better than the people of England can. Besides, it is their own estates and property, their own rights, liberties, and government they are defending ; and, were they not to do it, they deserve to lose all, and none would pity them. The fault would be their own, and their punishment just.

The British army in America care not how long the war lasts. They enjoy an easy and indolent life. They fatten on the folly of one country and the spoils of another ; and, between their plunder and their pay, may go home rich. But the case is very different with the labouring farmer, the working tradesman, and the necessitous poor in England, the sweat of whose brow goes day after day to feed, in prodigality and sloth, the army that is robbing both them and us. Removed from the eye of the country that supports them, and distant from the government that employs them, they cut and carve for themselves, and there is none to call them to account.

But England will be ruined, says Lord Shelburne, if America is independent.

Then,

"Then, I say, is England already ruined, for America is already independent: and if Lord Shelburne will not allow this, he immediately denies the fact which he infers. Besides, to make England the mere creature of America, is paying too great a compliment to us, and too little to himself.

But the declaration is a rhapsody of incoherence. For to say, as Lord Shelburne has numberless times said, that the war against America is ruinous, and yet to continue the prosecution of that ruinous war for the purpose of avoiding ruin, is a language which cannot be understood. Neither is it possible to see how the independence of America is to accomplish the ruin of England after the war is over, and yet not effect it before. America cannot be more independent of her, nor a greater enemy to her hereafter, than she is now; nor England derive less advantages from her than at present: why then is ruin to follow in the best state of the case, and not in the worst? And if not in the worst, why is it to follow at all?

That a nation is to be ruined by peace and commerce, and fourteen or fifteen millions a-year less expences than before, is a new doctrine in politics. We have heard much clamour of national savings and economy; but surely the true economy would be to save the whole charge of a silly, foolish, and headstrong war; because, compared with this, all other retrenchments are bawbles and trifles.

But is it possible that Lord Shelburne can be serious in supposing the least advantage can be obtained by arms, or that any advantage can be equal to the expence or the danger of attempting it? Will not the capture of one army after another satisfy him, but all must become prisoners? Must England ever be the sport of hope, and the dupe of delusion? Sometimes our currency was to fail; another time our army was to disband: then the whole provinces were to revolt. Such a general said this and that; another wrote so and so. Lord Chatham was of this opinion; and Lord Somebody else of another. To-

day 20,000 Russians and twenty Russian ships of the line were to come; to-morrow the Empress was abused without mercy or decency.—Then the Emperor of Germany was to be bribed with a million of money, and the King of Prussia was to do wonderful things. At one time it was, Lo here! and then it was, Lo there! Sometimes this Power, and sometimes that Power, was to engage in the war, just as if the whole world was as mad and foolish as Britain. And thus, from year to year, has every straw been caught at, and every Will-with-a-wisp led them a new dance.

This year a still newer folly is to take place. Lord Shelburne wishes to be sent to Congress, and he thinks that something may be done.

Are not the repeated declarations of Congress, and which all America supports, that they will not even hear any proposals whatever, until the unconditional and unequivocal Independence of America is recognised; are not, I say, these declarations answer enough?

But for England to receive any thing from America now, after so many insults, injuries, and outrages, acted towards us, would shew such a spirit of meanness in her, that we could not but despise her for accepting it. And so far from Lord Shelburne coming here to solicit it, it would be the greatest disgrace we could do them to offer it. England would appear a wretch indeed, at this time of day, to ask or owe any thing to the bounty of America. Has not the name of Englishman blots enough upon it, without inventing more? Even Lucifer would scorn to reign in Heaven by permission, and yet an Englishman can creep for only an entrance into America. Or has a land of Liberty so many charms, that to be a door-keeper in it is better than to be an English Minister of State?

But what can this expected something be? or, if obtained, what can it amount to, but new disgraces, contentions, and quarrels? The people of America have for years accustomed themselves to think and speak so freely and contemptuously of English authority, and the inveteracy is so deeply rooted, that a person invested with any authori-

ty from that country, and attempting to exercise it here, would have the life of a toad under a harrow. They would look on him as an interloper, to whom their compassion permitted a residence. He would be no more than the Mungo of the farce; and if he disliked that, he must set off. It would be a station of degradation, debased by our pity, and despised by our pride, and would place England in a more contemptible situation than any she has yet suffered by the war. We have too high an opinion of ourselves ever to think of yielding again the least obedience to outlandish authority; and, for a thousand reasons, England would be the last country in the world to yield it to. She has been treacherous, and we know it. Her character is gone, and we have seen the funeral.

Surely she loves to fish in troubled waters, and drink the cup of contention, or she would not now think of mingling her affairs with those of America. It would be like a foolish dottard taking to his arms the bride that despises him, or who has placed on his head the ensigns of her disgust. It is kissing the hand that boxes his ears, and proposing to renew the exchange. The thought is as servile as the war was wicked, and shews the last scene of the drama as inconsistent as the first.

As America is gone, the only act of manhood is to *let her go*. Your Lordship had no hand in the separation, and you will gain no honour by temporising politics. Besides, there is something so exceedingly whimsical, unsteady, and even insincere, in the present conduct of England, that she exhibits herself in the most dishonourable colours.

On the second of August last, General Carleton and Admiral Digby wrote to General Washington in these words:

“ The resolution of the House of Commons of the 27th
 “ of February last have been placed in your Excellency’s
 “ hands, and intimations given at the same time, that farther pacific measures were likely to follow. Since which,
 “ until the present time, we have had no direct communications from England; but a mail is now arrived,
 “ which

“ which brings us very important information. We are
 “ acquainted, Sir, *by authority*, that negotiations for a ge-
 “ neral peace have already commenced at Paris ; and that
 “ Mr Grenville is invested with full powers to treat with
 “ all the parties at war, and is now at Paris in the execu-
 “ tion of his commission. And we are farther, Sir, made
 “ acquainted, that his Majesty, in order to remove all
 “ obstacles to that peace which he so ardently wishes to re-
 “ store, has commanded his ministers to direct Mr Gren-
 “ ville, that the Independence of the Thirteen United
 “ Provinces should be proposed by him in the first in-
 “ stance, instead of making it a condition of a general
 “ treaty.”

Now, taking your present measures into view, and comparing them with the declaration in this letter, pray, what is the word of your King, or his Ministers, or the Parliament, good for ? Must we not look upon you as a confederated body of faithless, treacherous men, whose assurances are fraud, and their language deceit ? What opinion can we possibly form of you, but that you are a lost, abandoned, profligate nation, who sport even with your own character, and are to be held by nothing but the bayonet or the halter ?

To say, after this, “ that the sun of Great Britain will
 “ be set whenever she acknowledges the Independence of
 “ of America,” when the not doing it is the unqualified lie of Government, can be no other than the language of ridicule, the jargon of inconsistency. There were thousands in America who predicted the delusion, and looked upon it as a trick of treachery, to take us from our guard, and draw off our attention from the only system of finance, by which we can be called, or deserve to be called, a sovereign, independent people. The fraud, on your part, might be worth attempting, but the sacrifice to obtain it is too high.

There were others who credited the assurance, because they thought it impossible that men who had their characters

acters to establish would begin it with a lie. The prosecution of the war by the former ministry was savage and horrid; since which it has been mean, trickish, and delusive. The one went greedily into the passion of revenge, the other into the subtleties of low contrivance; till, between the crimes of both, there is scarcely left a man in America, be he Whig or Tory, who does not despise or detest the conduct of Britain.

The management of Lord Shelburne, whatever may be his views, is a caution to us, and must be to the world, never to regard British assurances. A perfidy so notorious cannot be hid. It stands even in the public papers of New York, with the names of Carleton and Digby affixed to it. It is a proclamation that the King of England is not to be believed: that the spirit of lying is the governing principle of the Ministry. It is holding up the character of the House of Commons to public infamy, and warning all men not to credit them. Such is the consequence which Lord Shelburne's management has brought upon his country.

After the authorised declarations contained in Carleton and Digby's letter, you ought, from every motive of honour, policy, and prudence, to have fulfilled them, whatever might have been the event. It was the least atonement you could possibly make to America, and the greatest kindness you could do to yourselves; for you will save millions by a general peace, and you will lose as many by continuing the war.

COMMON SENSE.

*Philadelphia,
October 29, 1782.*

P. S. The manuscript copy of this letter is sent to your Lordship, by the way of our Head Quarters, to New York, inclosing a late pamphlet of mine, addressed to the Abbe Reynal, which will serve to give your Lordship some idea of the principles and sentiments of America.

C. S.

A P P E N -

APPENDIX.

THE two following Letters were first published in England in the Morning Post.

TO THE AUTHORS OF THE

THE REPUBLICAN,

GENTLEMEN,

M. DUCHASTELET has mentioned to me the intention of some persons to commence a Work under the title of THE REPUBLICAN.

As I am a Citizen of a country which knows no other Majesty than that of the People—no other Government than that of the Representative body—no other Sovereignty than of the Laws, and which is attached to France both by Alliance and by Gratitude, I voluntarily offer you my services in support of principles as honourable to a nation, as they are adapted to promote the happiness of mankind. I offer them to you with the more zeal, as I know the moral, literary, and political character of those who are engaged in the undertaking, and find myself honoured in their good opinion.

But I must at the same time observe, that, from my ignorance of the French language, my works must necessarily

farily undergo a translation; they can of course be but of little utility, and my offering must consist more of wishes than services—I must add, that I am obliged to pass a part of this summer in England and Ireland.

As the Public has done me the unmerited favour of recognizing me under the appellation of “Common Sense,” which is my usual signature, I shall continue it in this publication to avoid mistakes, and to prevent my being supposed the author of works not my own. As to my political principles, I shall endeavour, in this letter, to trace their general features in such a manner, as that they cannot be misunderstood.

It is desirable in most instances to avoid that which may give even the least suspicion with respect to the part meant to be adopted, and particularly on the present occasion, where a perfect clearness of expression is necessary to the avoidance of any possible misinterpretation. I am happy, therefore, to find, that the work in question is intitled “The Republican.” This word expresses perfectly the idea which we ought to have of Government in general—*Res Publica*—the public affairs of a Nation.

As to the word Monarchy, though the address and intrigue of Courts have rendered it familiar, it does not contain the less of reproach or of insult to a nation. The word, in its immediate and original sense, signifies “The absolute Power of a single Individual,” who may prove a fool, an hypocrite, or a tyrant. The appellation admits of no other interpretation than that which is here given. France is therefore not a Monarchy; it is insulted when called by that name. The servile spirit which characterises this species of Government is banished from France, and this country, like America, can now afford to Monarchy no more than a glance of disdain.

Of the errors which monarchic ignorance or knavery has spread through the world; the one, which bears the marks of the most dextrous invention, is the opinion that the system of Republicanism is only adapted to a small country,

country, and that a Monarchy is suited, on the contrary, to those of greater extent. Such is the language of Courts, and such the sentiments which they have caused to be adopted in monarchic countries; but the opinion is contrary at the same time to principle and to experience.

The Government, to be of real use, should possess a complete knowledge of all the parties—all the circumstances, and all the interests of a nation. The monarchic system, in consequence, instead of being suited to a country of great extent, would be more admissible in a small territory, where an individual may be supposed to know the affairs and the interests of the whole. But, when it is attempted to extend this individual knowledge to the affairs of a great country, the capacity of knowing bears no longer any proportion to the extent or multiplicity of the objects which ought to be known, and the Government inevitably falls from ignorance into tyranny. For the proof of this position we need only look to Spain, Russia, Germany, Turkey, and the whole of the Eastern Continent—Countries, for the deliverance of which, I offer my most sincere wishes.

On the Contrary, the true Republican system, by Election and Representation, offers the only means which are known, and in my opinion the only means which are possible of proportioning the wisdom and information of a Government to the extent of a country.

The system of Representation is the strongest and most powerful centre that can be devised for a nation. Its attraction acts so powerfully, that men give it their approbation even without reasoning the cause; and France, however distant its several parts, finds itself at this moment AN WHOLE in its Central Representation. The citizen is assured that his rights are protected, and the soldier feels that he is no longer the Slave of a Despot, but that he is become one of the Nation, and interested of course in its defence.

The

The States at present stiled Republican, as Holland, Genoa, Venice, Berne, &c. are not only unworthy of the name, but are actually in opposition to every principle of a Republican Government, and the countries submitted to their power are, truly speaking, subjected to an Aristocratic Slavery!

It is, perhaps, impossible in the first steps which are made in a Revolution, to avoid all kinds of error, in principle or in practice, or in some instances to prevent the combination of both. Before the sense of a nation is sufficiently enlightened, and before men have entered into the habits of a free communication with each other of their natural thoughts, a certain reserve—a timid prudence seizes on the human mind, and prevents it from attaining its level, with that vigour and promptitude which belongs to Right.—An example of this influence discovers itself in the commencement of the present Revolution: but happily this discovery has been made before the Constitution was completed, and in time to provide a remedy.

The Hereditary Succession can never exist as a matter of Right; it is a nullity—a nothing. To admit the idea is to regard men as a species of property belonging to some individuals, either born or to be born! It is to consider our descendants, and all posterity, as mere animals without a Right or a Will! It is, in fine, the most base humiliating idea that ever degraded the human species, and which, for the honour of humanity, should be destroyed for ever.

The idea of hereditary succession is so contrary to the Rights of Man, that if we were ourselves to be recalled to existence, instead of being replaced by our posterity, we should not have the right of depriving ourselves beforehand of those Rights which would not then properly belong to us. On what ground, then, or by what authority do we dare to deprive of their rights those children who will soon be men? Why are we not struck with the in-

justice which we perpetrate on our descendants, by endeavouring to transmit them as a vile herd, to masters whose vices are all that can be foreseen.

Whenever the French Constitution shall be rendered conformable to its declaration of Rights, we shall then be enabled to give to France, and with justice, the appellation of a Civic Empire ; for its government will be the empire of Laws founded on the great Republican principles of Elective Representation, and the Rights of Man.—But Monarchy and hereditary succession are incompatible with the basis of its constitution.

I hope that I have at present sufficiently proved to you that I am a good Republican ; and I have such a confidence in the truth of these principles, that I doubt not they will soon be as universal in France as in America. The pride of human nature will assist their evidence, will contribute to their establishment, and Men will be ashamed of Monarchy.

I am, with respect,

Gentlemen,

Your friend,

THOMAS PAINE.

LETTER

LETTER

TO THE

ABBE SYEYES.

Paris, 8th July 1791.

SIR,

“ AT the moment of my departure for England, I read, in the *MONITEUR* of Tuesday last, your letter, in which you give the challenge, on the subject of Government, and offer to defend what is called the Monarchical Opinion against the Republican system.

“ I accept of your challenge with pleasure ; and I place such a confidence in the superiority of the Republican System over that nullity of system, called Monarchy, that I engage not to exceed the extent of fifty pages, and to leave you the liberty of taking as much latitude as you may think proper.

“ The respect which I bear to your moral and literary reputation will be your security for my candour in the course of this discussion ; but, notwithstanding that I shall treat the subject seriously and sincerely, let me premise, that I consider myself at liberty to ridicule as they deserve, Monarchical absurdities, whensoever the occasion shall present itself.

“ By

“ By Republicanism, I do not understand what the name signifies in Holland, and in some parts of Italy. I understand simply a government by representation—a government founded upon the principles of the Declaration of Rights; principles to which several parts of the French Constitution arise in contradiction. The Declarations of the Rights of France and America are but one and the same thing in principles, and almost in expressions; and this is the Republicanism which I undertake to defend against what is called Monarchy and Aristocracy.

“ I see with pleasure, that in respect to one point, we are already agreed; and “ that is the extreme danger of a “ Civil List of thirty millions.” I can discover no reason why one of the parts of the government should be supported with so extravagant a profusion, whilst the other scarcely receives what is sufficient for its common wants.

“ This dangerous and dishonourable disproportion at once supplies the one with the means of corrupting, and throws the other into the predicament of being corrupted. In America there is but little difference, with regard to this point, between the legislative and executive part of our government; but the first is much better attended to than it is in France.*

“ In whatsoever manner, Sir, I may treat the subject of which you proposed the instigation, I hope that you will not doubt my entertaining for you the highest esteem. I must also add, that I am not the personal enemy of Kings. Quite the contrary. No man more heartily wishes than myself to see them all in the happy and honourable state of private individuals; but, I am the avowed, open, and intrepid enemy of what is called Monarchy; and I am such by principles which nothing can either alter or corrupt

* A Deputy to the Congress receives about a guinea and a half daily; and provisions are cheaper in America than in France.

rupt—by my attachment to humanity; by the anxiety which I feel for the dignity and the honour of the human race; by the disgust which I observe when I see men directed by children, and governed by brutes; by the horror which all the evils of Monarchy has spread over the earth excite within my breast; and by those sentiments which make me shudder at the calamities, the exactions, the wars, and the massacres with which Monarchy has crushed mankind: in short, it is against all the Hell of Monarchy that I have declared war.

(Signed)

THOMAS PAINE.

THOUGHTS

THOUGHTS
ON THE
PEACE,
AND
PROBABLE ADVANTAGES THEREOF.

“THE times that tried men’s souls”* are over—and the greatest and completest Revolution the world ever knew is gloriously and happily accomplished.

But, to pass from the extremes of danger to safety—from the tumult of war to the tranquillity of peace, though sweet in contemplation, requires a gradual composure of the senses to receive it. Even calmness has the power of stunning, when it opens too instantly upon us. The long and raging hurricane that should cease in a moment, would leave us in a state rather of wonder than enjoyment; and some moments of recollection must pass, before we could be capable of tasting the full felicity of repose. There are but few instances in which the mind is fitted for sudden transitions; it takes in its pleasures by reflection and comparison, and those must have time to act, before the relish for new scenes is complete.

In

* “These are the times that try men’s souls.”

In the present case—the mighty magnitude of the object—the various uncertainties of fate it has undergone—the numerous and complicate dangers we have suffered or escaped—the eminence we now stand on, and the vast prospect before us, must all conspire to impress us with contemplation.

To see it in our power to make a world happy—to teach mankind the art of being so—to exhibit on the theatre of the universe a character hitherto unknown—and to have, as it were, a new creation entrusted to our hands, are honours that command reflection, and can neither be too highly estimated, nor too gratefully received.

In this pause, then, of recollection—While the storm is ceasing, and the long-agitated mind vibrating to rest, let us look back on the scenes we have passed, and learn from experience what is yet to be done.

Never, I say, had a country so many openings to happiness as this. Her setting out into life, like the rising of a fair morning, was unclouded and promising. Her cause was good; her principles just and liberal; her temper serene and firm; her conduct regulated by the nicest steps of order; and every thing about her wore the mark of honour.

It is not every country (perhaps there is not another in the world) that can boast so fair an origin. Even the first settlement of America corresponds with the character of Revolution. Rome, once the proud mistress of the universe, was originally a band of ruffians. Plunder and rapine made her rich, and her oppression of millions made her great. But America needs never be ashamed to tell her birth, nor relate the stages by which she rose to empire.

The remembrance, then, of what is past, if it operate rightly, must inspire her with the most laudable of all ambition, that of adding to the fair fame she began with. The world has seen her great in adversity; struggling, without a thought of yielding, beneath accumulated difficulties;

culties; bravely, nay proudly encountering distress, and rising in resolution as the storm increased. All this is justly due to her, for her fortitude has merited the character. Let, then, the world see that she can bear prosperity; and that her honest virtue in time of peace is equal to the bravest virtue in time of war.

She is now descending to the scenes of quiet and domestic life; not beneath the cypress shade of disappointment, but to enjoy in her own land, and under her own vine, the sweets of her labours, and the reward of her toil. In this situation, may she never forget, that a fair national reputation is of as much importance as independence; that it possesses a charm which wins upon the world, and makes even enemies civil; that it gives a dignity which is often superior to power, and commands a reverence where pomp and splendor fail.

It would be a circumstance ever to be lamented, and never to be forgotten, were a single blot, from any cause whatever, suffered to fall on a Revolution, which, to the end of time, must be an honour to the age that accomplished it; and which has contributed more to enlighten the world, and diffuse a spirit of freedom and liberality among mankind, than any human event (if this can be called one) that ever preceded it.

It is not among the least of the calamities of a long-continued war, that it unhinges the mind from those nice sensations which at other times appear so amiable. The continual spectacle of woe blunts the finer feelings, and the necessity of bearing with the sight renders it familiar. In like manner are many of the moral obligations of society weakened, till the custom of acting by necessity becomes an apology where it is truly a crime. Let but a nation conceive rightly of its character, and it will be chastely just in protecting it. None ever began with a fairer than America, and none can be under a greater obligation to preserve it.

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The debt which America has contracted, compared with the cause she has gained, and the advantages to flow from it, ought scarcely to be mentioned. She has it in her choice to do, and to live, as happily as she pleases. The world is in her hands. She has now no Foreign Power to monopolize her commerce, perplex her legislation, or controul her prosperity. The struggle is over which must one day have happened, and, perhaps, never could have happened at a better time*; and, instead of a domineering master, she has gained an ally, whose exemplary greatness, and universal liberality, have extorted a confession even from her enemies.

With the blessings of peace, independence, and an universal commerce, the States, individually and collectively, will have leisure and opportunity to regulate and establish

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* That the Revolution began at the exact period of time best fitted to the purpose, is sufficiently proved by the event. But the great hinge on which the whole machine turned, is the UNION OF THE STATES; and this Union was naturally produced by the inability of any one State to support itself against a foreign enemy, without the assistance of the rest.

Had the States severally been less able than they were when the war began, their united strength would not have been equal to the undertaking, and they must, in all human probability, have failed.—And, on the other hand, had they severally been more able, they might not have seen, or, what is more, might not have felt the necessity of uniting; and, either by attempting to stand alone, or in small confederacies, would have been separately conquered.

Not, as we cannot see a time (and many years must pass away before it can arrive) when the strength of any one State, or of several united, can be equal to the whole of the present United States; and, as we have seen the extreme difficulty of collectively prosecuting the war to a successful issue, and preserving our national importance in the world; therefore, from the experience we have had, and the knowledge we have gained, we must, unless we make a waste of wisdom, be strongly impressed with the advantage, as well as the necessity, of strengthening the happy Union which has been our salvation, and without which we should have been a ruined people.

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their domestic concerns, and to put it beyond the power of calumny to throw the least reflection on their honour. Character is much easier kept than recovered; and that man, if any such there be, who, from any sinister views, or littleness of soul, lends, unseen, his hand to injure it, contrives a wound it will never be in his power to heal.

As we have established an inheritance for posterity, let that inheritance descend with every mark of an honourable conveyance. The little it will cost, compared with the worth of the States, the greatness of the object, and the value of national character, will be a profitable exchange.

But that which must more forcibly strike a thoughtful, penetrating mind, and which includes and renders easy all inferior concerns, is the *Union of the States*. On this our great national character depends. It is this which must give us importance abroad, and security at home. It is thro' this only that we are, or can be, nationally known in the world. It is the flag of the United States which renders our ships and

While I was writing this note, I cast my eye on the pamphlet *COMMON SENSE*, from which I shall make an extract, as it applies exactly to the case. It is as follows :

" I have never met with a man, either in England or America, who hath not confessed his opinion, that a separation between the countries would take place one time or other : and there is no instance in which we have shewn less judgment, than endeavouring to describe, what we call the ripeness or fitness of the Continent for Independence.

" As all men allow the measure, and differ only in their opinion of the time, let us, in order to remove mistakes, take a general survey of things, and endeavour, if possible, to find out the Very Time. But, we need not go far; the inquiry ceases at once, for the TIME hath found us. The general concurrence, the glorious union of all things, prove the fact.

" It is not in Numbers, but in an Union, that our great strength lies. The Continent is just arrived at the pitch of strength, in which no single colony is able to support itself, and the whole, when united, can accomplish the matter : and either more or less than this might be fatal in its effects."

and commerce safe on the seas, or in a foreign port. Our Mediterranean passes must be obtained under the same style. All our treaties, whether of alliance, peace, or commerce, are formed under the sovereignty of the United States; and Europe knows us by no other name or title.

The division of the Empire into States is for our own convenience, but abroad this distinction ceases. The affairs of each State are local: they can go no farther than to itself; and were the whole worth of even the richest of them expended in revenue, it would not be sufficient to support sovereignty against a foreign attack. In short, we have no other national sovereignty than as United States. It would even be fatal for us if we had—too expensive to be maintained, and impossible to be supported. Individuals, or individual States, may call themselves what they please; but the world, and especially the world of enemies, is not to be held in awe by the whistling of a name. Sovereignty must have power to protect all the parts which compose and constitute it: and, as *United States*, we are equal to the importance of the title, but otherwise we are not. Our Union, well and wisely regulated and cemented, is the cheapest way of being great—the easiest way of being powerful—and the happiest invention in government which the circumstances of America can admit of; because it collects from each State, that which, by being inadequate, can be of no use to it, and forms an aggregate that serves for all.

The States of Holland are an unfortunate instance of the effects of individual sovereignty. Their disjointed condition exposes them to numerous intrigues, losses, calamities, and enemies; and the almost impossibility of bringing their measures to a decision, and that decision into execution, is to them, and would be to us, a source of endless misfortune.

It is with Confederate States as with individuals in society: something must be yielded up, to make the whole secure. In this view of things, we gain by what we give, and draw

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an annual interest greater than the capital. I ever feel myself hurt, when I hear the Union, that great palladium of our liberty and safety, the least irreverently spoken of. It is the most sacred thing in the constitution of America, and that which every man should be the most proud and tender of. Our citizenship in the United States is our national character; our citizenship in any particular State is only our local distinction. By the latter we are known at home; by the former to the world. Our great title is *Americans*; our inferior one varies with the place.

So far as my endeavours could go, they have all been directed to conciliate the affections, unite the interests, and draw and keep the mind of the country together; and the better to assist in this foundation-work of the Revolution, I have avoided all places of profit or office, either in the State I live in, or in the United States; kept myself at a distance from all parties and party connections, and even disregarded all private and inferior concerns: and, when we take into view the great work we have gone through, and feel, as we ought to feel, the just importance of it, we shall then see, that the little wranglings and indecent contentions of personal party are as dishonourable to our characters, as they are injurious to our repose.

It was the cause of America that made me an author. The force with which it struck my mind, and the dangerous condition the country appeared to me in, by courting an impossible and unnatural reconciliation with those who were determined to reduce her, instead of striking out into the only line that could cement and save her, *A Declaration of Independence*—made it impossible for me, feeling as I did, to be silent: and if, in the course of more than seven years, I have rendered her any service, I have likewise added something to the reputation of literature, by freely and disinterestedly employing it in the great cause of mankind, and shewing there may be genius without prostitution.

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Independence always appeared to me practicable and probable, provided the sentiment of the country could be formed and held to the object: and there is no instance in the world, where a people so extended, and wedded to former habits of thinking, and under such a variety of circumstances, were so instantly and effectually pervaded, by a turn in politics, as in the case of Independence, and who supported their opinion, undiminished, through such a succession of good and ill fortune, till they crowned it with success.

But, as the scenes of war are closed, and every man preparing for home and happier times, I therefore take my leave of the subject. I have most sincerely followed it from beginning to end, and through all its turns and windings: and whatever country I may hereafter be in, I shall always feel an honest pride at the part I have taken and acted, and a gratitude to Nature and Providence for putting it in my power to be of some use to mankind.

THOMAS PAINE.

Philadelphia, April 19, 1783.

THE END.

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